

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COLOMB 03163 300300Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MCT-01 DHA-05 AID-05 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 /079 W

-----106923 300306Z /72

R 291031Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8022

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL MADRAS

CINCPAC

UNCLAS COLOMBO 3163

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CE

SUBJ: SITUATION IN SRI LANKA - AUGUST 26-29

REF: COLOMBO 3121

1. THE WEEKEND SAW NO REPORTS OF MAJOR AND A SHARP DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF MINOR VIOLENT INCIDENTS. THE LOCAL PRESS REPORTS THE NUMBER OF DEATHS AS 112. REFLECTING THE GOVERNMENT'S GROWING CONFIDENCE THAT IT HAS GAINED CONTROL OVER THE SITUATION, CURFEW HOURS ON SATURDAY AND SUNDAY WERE SHORTENED TO SEVEN HOURS, 2100 TO 0400, AND WERE AGAIN SHORTENED AUGUST 29 TO SIX HOURS, 2200 TO 0400. THE CURFEW IS APPLICABLE ISLAND-WIDE EXCEPT JAFFNA, WHERE IT HAS BEEN LIFTED BECAUSE OF ALLEGATIONS THAT SOME POLICE, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE CURFEW, HAD SET FIRE TO A ROW OF SHOPS IN THE BAZAAR AREA. WE EXPECT THE GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE TO RELAX THE CURFEW HOURS DURING THE WEEK AND POSSIBLY TO ELIMINATE THEM BY THE END OF THE WEEK IF ALL STAYS QUIET.

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PAGE 02 COLOMB 03163 300300Z

2. THE NUMBER OF TAMIL REFUGEES WHICH REPORTEDLY REACHED AS HIGH AS 35,000 IS ALSO DIMINISHING. THE NUMBER OF PERSONS ACTUALLY DISLOCATED BY THE VIOLENCE, HOWEVER, PROBABLY EXCEEDS THE 35,000 FIGURE AS SEVERAL THOUSAND TAMILS LEFT THEIR HOMES AND TEMPORARILY MOVED IN WITH FRIENDS. THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 25,000 TAMILS STILL IN REFUGEE CAMPS BEING MAINTAINED

BY THE GOVERNMENT AT A COST OF 100 THOUSAND RUPEES PER DAY.
AS MANY AS 15,000 TAMILS HAVE MOVED OR BEEN MOVED TO JAFFNA.

3. MRS. BANDARANAIKE IN A STATEMENT ON THE VIOLENCE MADE
AUGUST 27 TOOK THE GOVERNMENT TO TASK FOR FAILING IN ITS
DUTY "TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR."
HARKING BACK TO THE POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE, MRS. BANDARANAIKE
LINKS THE GOVERNMENT'S INABILITY TO CONTROL VIOLENCE THEN TO
THE OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE IN JAFFNA AND THE SUBSEQUENT VIOLENCE,
LOOTING, AND ARSON. HAD THE GOVERNMENT ACTED IMMEDIATELY TO
INVESTIGATE THE POLICE-CIVILIAN INCIDENT IN JAFFNA, SHE MAIN-
TAINS, SUBSEQUENT VIOLENCE WOULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED. "INSTEAD,
THE GOVERNMENT'S LACK OF INTEREST OR SHIRKING OF RESPONSIBILITY
ALLOWED THE SITUATION TO GROW TO UNCONTROLLABLE PROPORTIONS."
SHE ALSO ACCUSES THE GOVERNMENT OF LOOKING FOR A SCAPEGOAT IN
ITS ALLEGATION OF A POLITICAL CONSPIRACY AND ITS ARREST OF
SLFP MEMBERS. AT THE END OF THE STATEMENT, SHE CALLED FOR
ALL PEOPLE TO ACT CALMLY AND WITH RESTRAINT AND TO HELP MAIN-
TAIN LAW AND ORDER.
WRIGGINS

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Litigation History:
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